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| **Knowledge**  *Philip Memmer*  **My philosopher friend is explaining again that the bottle of well-chilled beer in my hand**  **might not be a bottle of beer, that the trickle of bottle-sweat cooling in my palm**  **might not be wet, might not be cool, that in fact it’s impossible ever to know**  **if I’m holding a bottle at all. I try to follow his logic, flipping the steaks**  **that are almost certainly hissing over the bed of coals – coals I’d swear**  **were black at first, then gray, then red –  coals we could spread out and walk on**  **and why not, I ask, since we’ll never be sure if our feet burn, if our soles**  **blister and peel, if our faithlessness is any better or worse a tool**  **than the firewalker’s can-do extreme. *Exactly*, he smiles. Behind the fence**  **the moon rises, or seems to. *Have another*. Whatever else is true,**  **the coals feel hotter than ever as the darkness begins to do**  **what darkness does. *Another what?* I ask.**    From *Poems and Plays #11*, spring/summer 2004  Copyright 2004 Philip Memmer. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission ([*click for permissions information*](https://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/p180-permissions.html#084)). |
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